

KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM INTERPRETED

TEXT: DANIEL 2:36-49

INTRODUCTION:

1. We left off last week with Daniel explaining to King Nebuchadnezzar the purpose of his unusual dream (2:30).
2. Tonight we will look at Daniel's interpretation, giving special attention to the legs of iron, with feet part of iron and part of clay, because this is the most important part of the prophecy.

I. BABYLON IS THE HEAD OF GOLD (2:37, 38).

1. Daniel addressed King Nebuchadnezzar as "a king of kings" (2:37). Interestingly, the prophet Ezekiel gives the same exact title to King Nebuchadnezzar in Ezekiel 26:7.
2. Daniel was careful to add that "the God of heaven" had given the king his kingdom, power, and strength, and glory" (2:37, 38; cf. 2:21).
3. Jeremiah 27:5-9 describes how God raised up King Nebuchadnezzar.
4. Daniel's speech before King Nebuchadnezzar is considerably different from the subservient kowtowing of the other wise men. John Walvoord said, "Here is a voice of truth which even Nebuchadnezzar must receive with submission."
5. Daniel summarized by saying to King Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of gold" (2:38). The empire was personified in its ruler, so Daniel said, "Thou (king of Babylon) art this head of gold."

II. THE SECOND AND THIRD KINGDOMS (2:39)

1. The second kingdom, Media-Persia, was "inferior" to Babylon (2:39). Silver is inferior to gold, and Media and Persia are represented by two arms of silver (2:32; cf. 5:28, 31; 6:8; 8:20; 11:1, 2).
2. Gold is more precious than silver and brass, which are inferior metals.
3. Medo-Persia was not inferior in geographic size. Persia actually had more territory than ancient Babylon, and the Greek Empire was larger than the Persian Empire. And the Roman Empire was greatest of all in size.
4. Compared to Babylon, Medo-Persia was not inferior in geographic size, but it was inferior in quality and authority and organization.
5. History confirms that the Medo-Persian Empire, and the empire of Alexander the Great which followed, lacked the central authority and fine organization which characterized the Babylonian Empire.

6. The third empire, Greece, "shall bear rule over all the earth" (2:39; cf. 8:21; 11:1-4).
7. "Daniel mentions only in the briefest way the second and the third kingdoms represented by the upper and lower parts of the body" (Walvoord).
8. The descending scale of value of the four metals suggests the degeneration of the human race through the ages. This is taught in Scripture (cf. Genesis 4-6; Romans 1), but is denied by the evolutionists who say man is evolving and developing and progressing, etc.
9. The third empire ends with the thighs, which are the upper part of the legs. This symbolizes that the Greek Empire would territorially embrace both the East and the West. It spread from Europe to India.
10. Furthermore, it spread south all the way to Libya and Egypt.

III. THE FOURTH EMPIRE, ROME (2:40-45)

1. The fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, represented by the legs and feet of the image, is the most important because it will reemerge "in the latter days" (2:28), leading up to the second coming of Christ (2:44).
2. Therefore Daniel gives more attention to this fourth kingdom than to the three preceding kingdoms put together.
3. There is no mention of a fifth kingdom, indicating that the fourth kingdom has never completely gone away. It is still alive today in various forms and will someday be reorganized, perhaps through the European Union, which is advancing quite rapidly.
4. The European Union was organized in order "to make war unthinkable and materially impossible and reinforce democracy."
5. According to Bible prophecy, the antichrist will take over this humanistic confederation "and by peace shall destroy many" (8:25).
6. The Roman Catholic Church tried to put the Roman Empire back together but they were unable to do so.
7. Charlemagne tried to put the Roman Empire back together but he was unable to do so.
8. Napoleon tried to put the Roman Empire back together but he was unable to do so.
9. Hitler and Mussolini, and many others, have tried to put the Roman Empire back together but were unable to do so.
10. The Nazis claimed their "Third Reich" (January 1933 to May 1945) was the successor of the medieval "Holy Roman Empire" (800 to

- 1806), which they called "the First Reich," and the German Empire from 1871 to 1918, the Second Reich.
11. The Nazis failed and the RCC has failed, but the antichrist will succeed. The final Roman government will produce the antichrist and the consummation of the wicked, Satanic one-world religion and one-world government.
 12. The significance of the iron legs of the fourth kingdom is the military strength of Rome (2:40). Rome broke in pieces and subdued all things. H. C. Leupold said, "The Roman legions were noted for their ability to crush all resistance with an iron heel."
 13. Ancient Rome had the power to break in pieces and subdue all that opposed them. And the revived Roman Empire, under the control of the antichrist, will have the same brutal power.
 14. Revelation 13:4 says, "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"
 15. Daniel said that the feet and the toes are part of potters' clay and part of iron (2:41). Iron and clay represent imperialism and democracy.
 16. This inherent weakness (iron and clay do not adhere well one to the other) signifies that, "the kingdom shall be divided." The strange mixture of iron and clay will not last long. It will eventually start to crumble and fall apart (2:42).
 17. The *Scofield Bible* says there will be, "Deterioration by division: The kingdom is divided into two, the legs (Eastern and Western empires), and these are again divided into kingdoms, the number of which when the Stone smites the image will be ten toes (2:42; cf. 7:23, 24)...Deterioration by admixture; the iron of the Roman *imperium* mixed with the clay of the popular will, fickle and easily molded."
 18. C. F. Keil said, "As the iron denotes the firmness of the kingdom, so the clay denotes its brittleness. The mixing of iron with clay represents the attempt to bind the two distinct and separate materials into one combined whole as fruitless, and altogether in vain."
 19. The weakness of the iron and clay mixture becomes more evident in the toes. The image could not stand for very long (2:42). "Broken" (2:42) means "brittle" (margin).
 20. It is assumed that the image had ten toes (2:42), and this corresponds with Daniel's vision in chapter 7, where he speaks of ten kings as being the last stage of Gentile power (7:7, 24-27).

21. Revelation 17:12 says, "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."
22. It is impossible to identify the ten kings now, though it should be clear in the future. This is a picture of the final state of the revived Roman Empire and its rulers.
23. Current events change constantly so it is unwise to predict the ten kings. For example, Ukraine is attempting to join the European Union, but Russia is invading Crimea, etc.
24. The reference in verse 43 of the mingling "with the seed of men" indicates that the iron represents imperialism, and the clay represents democracy (or "mob-ocracy"). Benjamin Franklin said, "Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch."
25. It should be noted that the USA was not established as a democracy, but as a constitutional republic. Sadly, our constitutional republic is beginning to fall apart just like King Nebuchadnezzar's image. This could explain why the USA is not found in Bible prophecy.
26. Some commentators see the mingling of seed as a reference to intermarriage. That is speculative. There was intermarriage in Babylon, Greece, and Persia and throughout history.
27. The idea here is that final form of the revived Roman Empire will include diverse elements -- national, political, religious, etc. -- and this "mingling" will prevent the final form of the kingdom from having a real unity.
28. This is why the revived Roman Empire will break up into a gigantic civil war at the end of the tribulation period.
29. In chapter 11, Daniel describes forces from the south, east, and north contending with the antichrist for supremacy (11:36-45).
30. The ten-toe stage of the image has not been fulfilled in history and is still prophetic.
31. Furthermore, the ten-toe stage is simultaneous, that is, the kingdoms will exist side by side and will be destroyed by one sudden catastrophic blow at the second coming of Christ.
32. Nothing like this has ever occurred in history, because Daniel 2:43-45 is still future, describing the collapse of the antichrist's one-world government.
33. Revelation 17:14 says, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them."
34. Daniel 2:44 says, "the God of heaven (shall) set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed."

35. This kingdom -- our Lord's millennial kingdom -- shall destroy and break in pieces the preceding kingdom, and it shall stand forever.
36. Daniel's prophecy should be compared with Revelation 19:11-21, which describes the second coming of Christ, when He will assume command as King of kings and Lord of lords.
37. Revelation 19:15 says, "He should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron."
38. The description of the stone as being cut out "of the mountain without hands" signifies that this kingdom will originate with God and not men (2:45).
39. The millennial kingdom of God will completely replace all vestiges of the preceding kingdoms. The Lord Jesus Christ will reign over the entire earth as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).
40. By the way, only the literal, premillennial interpretation of these prophecies make sense. That is why amillennialists generally avoid them.
41. Daniel concluded his interpretation by reaffirming the absolute certainty of the fulfillment of the dream, stating again that its interpretation comes from God, that the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure (2:45b).
42. King Nebuchadnezzar's dream assures the ultimate rule of God over the earth to be fulfilled, not only in the millennial kingdom, but "for ever" (2:44b).

CONCLUSION:

1. King Nebuchadnezzar was so overwhelmed by the dream, and by Daniel's interpretation of it that he acknowledged Daniel's God as the true "God of gods" (2:46, 47).
2. King Nebuchadnezzar's "worship" of Daniel (2:46) should be understood in that light. Nebuchadnezzar regarded Daniel as a great ambassador or representative of the true God and he was honoring him in his own (pagan) way.
3. Although Nebuchadnezzar's profession at this time was short of true faith in Daniel's God, it appears that King Nebuchadnezzar did get saved later on (cf. 4:1-3, 34-37).
4. In keeping with the king's promise to honor Daniel, Daniel was exalted and became "a great man" (2:48; cf. verse 6).

5. Many great gifts were given to Daniel, and he was installed as ruler over the whole province of Babylon, as well as chief of the governors over the wise men (2:48).
6. After having been generously honored by the king, Daniel requested that his three companions might also have a position of power and influence in the province of Babylon (2:49).
7. King Nebuchadnezzar granted Daniel's request, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to positions of trust in the government of the province of Babylon.
8. Daniel sat "in the gate of the king," by which is meant that he served in the king's court (2:49b). *Scofield margin*: "Cf. Genesis 19:1, Lot the compromiser with Daniel the inflexible."
9. John Walvoord said, "Thus Daniel, the obscure Jewish captive who could have been lost to history like many others if he had compromised in chapter 1, is now exalted to a place of great honor and power. Like Joseph in Egypt, he was destined to play an important part in the subsequent history of his generation" (*Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation*).